

Are Geographers Rational?

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Abstract. This paper will consider ways in which geocomputational techniques can be used to move spatial modelling in to the 21st century and a more realistic view of how people move in space. Modern economic theory no longer assumes that consumers are rational - that is they have perfect knowledge of the market, fixed preferences and the markets they operate in are efficient. However, geographers persist in making the assumption in modelling that people are rational in the way they move and interact with space. In effect geographic models assume that all the basic assumptions of neo-classical economics apply to geography. Millions of pounds are spent annually based on `old` geographic models which assume that people travel on the most efficient (shortest) route and that they are rational in the way they assess the cost of one route against another. There are many aspects of GeoComputation that can be used to help modellers relax this assumption. The paper will report work carried out at the Centre for Computational Geography in Leeds investigating the use of agent based modelling in a realistic geography.